

## Papermill Creek

Starting in November of each year, Papermill Creek makes it possible for visitors to enjoy a truly fascinating and wonderful natural spectacle—the annual spawning runs of the silver salmon. If one is very quiet and careful it is possible to watch these salmon once they have reached their favorite spawning riffles. It is also possible to watch them make their dramatic ascent of the waterfalls and rapids coming up Papermill Creek from the ocean. These runs may continue all the way through February, but they are usually over by late December. Fish that participate in these runs are three years old and near the end of their life-cycle. A number of very definite changes take place at this time. For one thing, the upper jaw of the male becomes enlarged and distorted, often curving down to form a hook—the feature that gave this west coast salmon its generic name, *Oncorhynchus kisutch*, (hooked nose salmon) and distinguishes it most clearly from its east coast relative, the Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*. When these fish enter fresh water they turn color. Males turn brick red. Females turn a dull bronze.

By the way, the largest silver salmon ever caught in California (22 pounds) was caught in January 1959 right here in Papermill Creek.

Steelhead trout, *Salmo gairdnerii*, generally make their spawning runs up Papermill Creek a bit later than silver salmon—usually during the months of February and March. Unlike the rambunctious salmon, the steelhead spawns quietly, returns to the ocean, and may return to spawn two or even three times. Mature steelhead can be recognized by their sharply defined small black dots and (when in fresh water) a broad pink or red stripe on each side of the body.

During the late 1960s and 1970s extremely low summertime water levels sharply limited the number of young silver salmon and steelhead. Summer fishing reduced this number still further. More recently, however, fishing in Papermill Creek has been prohibited and the Marin Municipal Water District has agreed to maintain a more normal minimum summertime flow of water.

More reliable stream flow will benefit the fish that use this stream, and at the same time benefit at least one member (a very tiny member) of California's endangered species list: the California freshwater shrimp *Syncauris pacifica*. This translucent to brown to dark reddish-purple shrimp was once common north

of San Francisco Bay, but is now found in just five California streams within Napa, Sonoma, and Marin Counties. Papermill Creek—throughout its entire length—is one of this species' few remaining prime habitats.

## Bicycle Trail

A paved bike trail runs about three miles through Samuel P. Taylor State Park from near the park entrance west to Tocoloma. It is ideal for family bicycle outings because there is no vehicular traffic and because it is gentle, nearly level, and quite scenic. The trail follows the old Northwest Pacific Railroad right-of-way which ran from Larkspur through this canyon to Tomales Bay and northward to Cazadero.

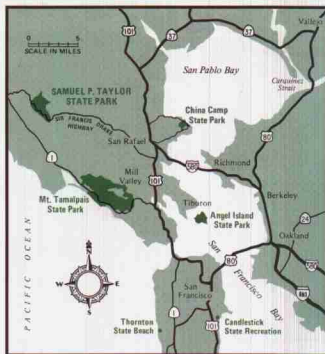
## Campground

There are 60 campsites in the redwood groves, each with a table, wood stove, food locker, and parking space. Piped drinking water and restrooms with hot showers are nearby. The parking spaces at several of the campsites will accommodate small trailers, but electricity, water, and sewage hookups are not available. For reservation information call MISTIX at 1-800-444-7275. A special camping area has been set aside for bicyclists.

Two group camp areas are located in the Madrone Group Area, about 300 yards west of the park entrance on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Combined capacity for these two areas is 75 persons. Reservations for groups can be made by calling MISTIX at 1-800-444-7275.

Devil's Gulch Horse Camp has a corral, hitching racks, watering troughs, and a camping area for up to 25 people. Reservations for the horse camp may be made through the park office at 415/488-9897.

The main picnic area at Samuel P. Taylor State Park is in a cool redwood grove along Papermill Creek. Each individual site has a table and a stove. Piped drinking water and restrooms are nearby. In addition to the main picnic area, the Redwood Grove Picnic Area is available for groups. Reservations for the Redwood Grove Picnic Area must be made in advance of arrival through MISTIX at 1-800-444-7275.



Samuel P. Taylor  
State Park  
P.O. Box 251  
Lagunitas, CA 94938  
415/488-9897



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

PETE WILSON  
Governor

DOUGLAS P. WHEELER  
Secretary for Resources

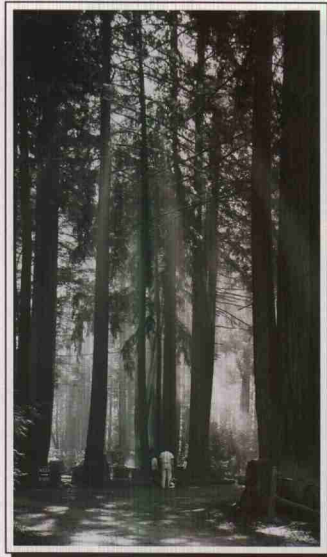
DONALD W. MURPHY  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
P.O. Box 942596  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

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# SAMUEL P. TAYLOR State Park



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

**S**amuel P. Taylor State Park is located just north of San Francisco in the steep rolling hills of central Marin County. Less than an hour's drive from San Francisco, the 2,882-acre park is within easy driving range of some of northern California's most dramatic outdoor scenery. It is just seven miles east of the spectacular Point Reyes National Seashore. It is also close to Mount Tamalpais State Park, the Marin headlands, and Muir Woods National Monument.

The natural landscape of the park includes some sharp contrasts. Along the canyon bottoms and up the north-facing slopes there are cool, shaded, fern-filled groves of coast redwoods, *Sequoia sempervirens*. A wonderful variety of flowers and lush green ground covers thrive in these groves. The striking *Aralia californica*, or elk clover, displays immense leaves that drape low over the stream banks, and in early summer, huge clusters of cream colored blossoms.

Just a short distance away, on the canyon's dry north side, is a more open grassland area where oak, tanoak, madrone, and other hardwoods are the domi-

nant trees. This area is most enjoyable during the spring and early summer when temperatures are moderate and California's grasslands are still lush and green. A network of hiking trails and fire roads make it easy to hike to the top of Mount Barnabe where turkey vultures, kestrels, red tailed hawks, and other large raptors soar wild and free over the rolling countryside.

Many people consider Devil's Gulch the most attractive area in the park. Wide grassy slopes offer countless opportunities to relax, bask in the sun, and perhaps enjoy a picnic. And Devil's Gulch Creek provides a touch of coolness on warm days during the summer. Live oak, laurel, Douglas fir, and madrone are the most common trees in this part of the park. A succession of California native wildflowers add an ever changing highlight to the landscape—starting with buttercups and milkmaids early in spring, followed by Indian paintbrush and the aptly-named farewell-to-spring as summer approaches.

Black-tailed deer are the most common large animal in the park, and of course there are countless

squirrels and other small animals in residence. Raccoons, striped skunks, and gray foxes are often seen, while badgers and bobcats are seen only occasionally. Mountain lions have been known to visit the park area, but actual sightings of this animal are extremely rare.

In the winter, silver salmon and steelhead trout still migrate up Papermill Creek to spawn. But the number of fish involved in these annual runs is not what it used to be. Destruction of natural habitat by human beings, and a series of natural disasters have reduced these fisheries dramatically. In response to this crisis, the California Department of Fish and Game and a number of volunteer groups have set out to restore the stream and its fisheries. While this process is underway, fishing is not permitted in Papermill Creek. Fishing is permitted, however, in the lakes that lie just outside the park on Marin Municipal Water District land. A state fishing license is required.

## History

In 1849, shortly after hearing about the great gold discovery in California, Samuel Penfield Taylor and a group of adventurous young friends purchased an old schooner, fitted her out and set sail for California from Boston Harbor. Ten months later, after several stopovers for emergency repair work, the little schooner finally arrived in San Francisco Bay.

Taylor did some business in San Francisco and then joined his friends in the gold country. Two years later, in August 1852, he shipped 6,173 pennyweight of gold to Curtis, Perry and Ward, his San Francisco bankers. The dust netted him \$5,691.99 and gave him his start in California.

Back in San Francisco, Taylor entered the lumber business and shortly afterward purchased 100 acres of timberland along with what is now Papermill Creek within the present state park. Timber was plentiful, but Taylor did not go into the logging business. Instead he built a paper mill and installed a paper-making process that utilized only scrap paper and rags gathered from San Francisco and other coastal towns. The mill produced newsprint for the dailies in San Francisco, fine paper for use as election ballots and other official documents, and square-bottomed paper bags, which were quite a novelty at the time.

Thirty thousand kegs of blasting powder were manufactured in a powder mill that Taylor built and operated at another site in the canyon. The mill was an extremely profitable venture at first, but Taylor's dream of becoming a major black-powder supplier ended with a violent explosion in November 1874. The mill never reopened.

A little town with about 100 families sprang up around Taylor's paper mill. Access to the area remained difficult, however, until 1874 when a narrow-gauge railroad was built through the canyon to serve the Point Reyes-Tomales Bay area. Taylor built a resort hotel beside the new railroad, and opened Camp Taylor, one of the first areas in the United States to offer outdoor camping as a recreational pursuit. During the late 1870s and early 1880s Taylorville was one of northern California's most popular and well-known weekend recreation areas.

View from Barnabe Peak west toward Inverness Ridge, & Point Reyes.



Devils Gulch Horse Camp.



Lagunitas Station, circa 1870.



The old mill on Papermill Creek circa 1890.



Old swimming hole looking upstream.



Picnic site in main picnic area.



Trail riders crossing Devil's Gulch Creek.

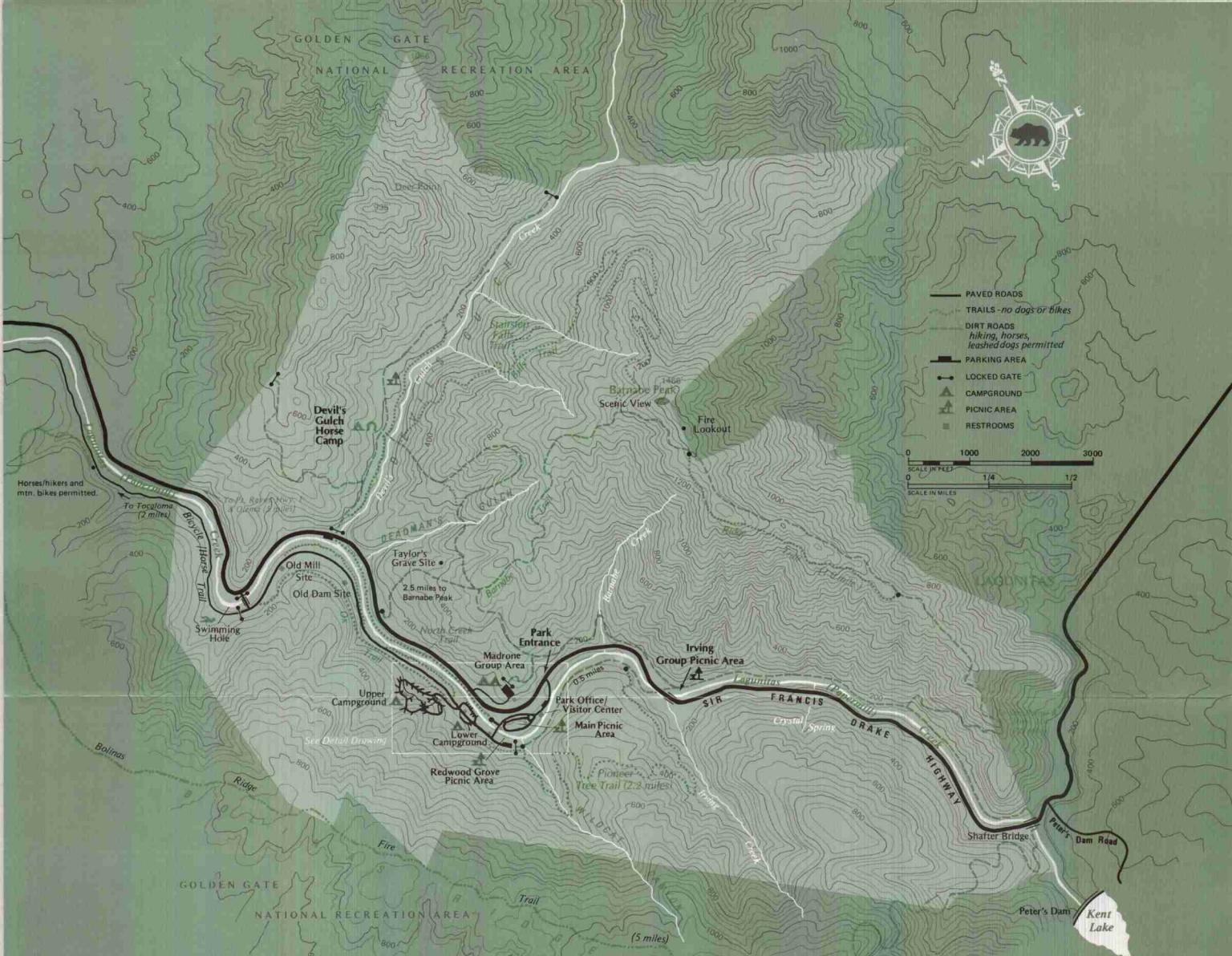


Sunday afternoon at Camp Taylor, circa 1900.

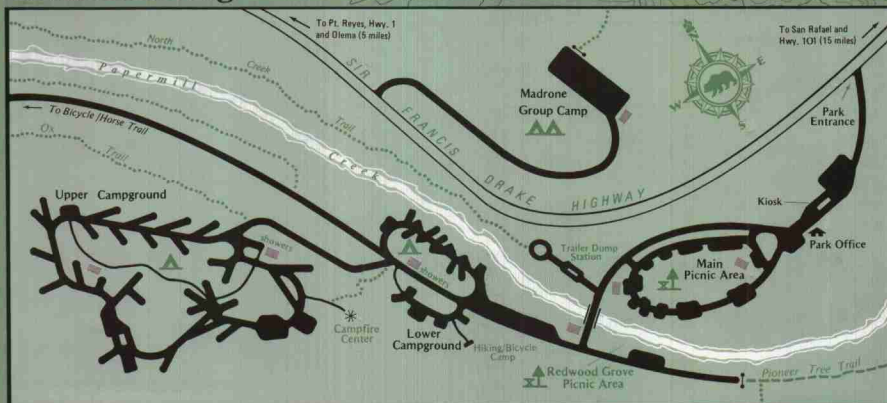


Samuel P. Taylor & employees in front of S.P. Taylor Paper Co. office in San Francisco, circa 1890.





## Detail Drawing



## WARNING!

Poison oak, prevalent in the park, has an oily substance on its leaves and a juice that are highly irritating to the skin. Note carefully the shape of the leaves, which turn from a shiny green in the spring to rich orange and red in the fall.

